ROCK RAIDERS

PLAYSTATION DESIGN DOCUMENT V1.1 – 23-04-99

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GLOBAL CONCEPT SUMMARY

LEGO System Rock Raiders will form the first batch of models to appear as part of the brand new LEGO System Underground theme. The inspiration for LEGO System Rock Raiders is a subterranean universe where brave mini-figures and giant drilling machines toil in extreme conditions to mine for precious energy crystals.

LEGO Media and LEGO Play Materials have collaborated at every stage of the concept development and will simultaneously deliver a range of products to the market place. This places Rock Raiders in a unique position within the LEGO Group as this is the first time in the company's history that multiple products have been derived from a single concept, thus benefiting from a unified marketing campaign.

Planned products include Rock Raiders play materials, PC CD-ROM and PlayStation games, puzzle books and comic books.

LAUNCH DATE

The global launch date of the new LEGO System Underground theme is September 1999.

ROCK RAIDERS UNIVERSE

Deep space, sometime in the near future…

The enormous geological survey ship LMS Explorer and its crew of Rock Raiders are returning home to LEGO World after a long expedition through the outer rim of the galaxy. Everything is going fine… until the vessel accidentally enters a giant asteroid field! The crew fights valiantly to guide the Explorer through the deadly tumbling rocks, but the endless bombardment against the ship's hull has put the shield integrity in a critical condition.

Now disaster strikes again as the Explorer is sucked inexorably towards a vast wormhole nestling at the centre of the asteroid field. With the ship low on power and listing badly, there is little the crew can do but accept their fate and hang on!

Miraculously the badly-damaged ship, now running on emergency power, emerges from the wormhole intact. However, the crew's initial relief soon turns to dismay as they realise that the wormhole has flung them right across the universe and into the heart of a distant alien galaxy!

Unperturbed, the captain sets a course for the nearest planet, gambling that the emergency power will hold out long enough for them to get there safely. Time is of the essence: if the Rock Raiders are to stand any chance of getting home, they must make emergency repairs to the LMS Explorer and, more importantly, replenish the ship’s depleted stock of energy crystals.

As the Explorer goes into orbit around the strange alien world, a geological scan reveals rich seams of energy crystals beneath the planet’s surface – but can the sensors be trusted? The only way to find out is to send in the Rock Raiders!

GAME OBJECTIVE

The player's overall objective is to mine for the precious energy crystals that the Rock Raiders need to re-energise the engines of the LMS Explorer and return home. Energy crystals are a well-recognised 'commodity' within various LEGO System themes and children recognise and understand their value in relation to LEGO games.

During the game the player will take direct control of various vehicles (which remain consistent with the models available in the Rock Raiders play materials range), selecting the most appropriate vehicle(s) for a given mission objective. For example, while the fast and manoeuvrable Hover Scout is perfect for scouting tunnels and caverns, players will have to switch to the sturdy Loader Dozer to crash through obstacles!

EMPHASIS CHANGE FROM PC TO PLAYSTATION

Although the original intention was for the PC and PlayStation versions of Rock Raiders to be identical, LEGO Media International and Data Design Interactive have since decided to make the two versions distinct. That said, both versions of Rock Raiders have the following in common...

- The universe description, storyline, characters and overall look and feel.
- The Play Materials featured.
- The player's overall objective.

The PC version of Rock Raiders can be summarised as…

- Real-time strategy game, akin to Starcraft and Command & Conquer.
- Player controls the game by using a mouse to click on units and moving them by clicking elsewhere (player has 'god'-like control over units).
- The Rock Raiders and their vehicles have a degree of computer-guided autonomy, so the player can have several units moving and acting simultaneously.
- Player manages resources (ore and energy crystals collected) to build new buildings and vehicles.
- Player wins each level by fulfilling certain criteria, i.e. finding a specific amount of ore and crystals and building a specific number of buildings.

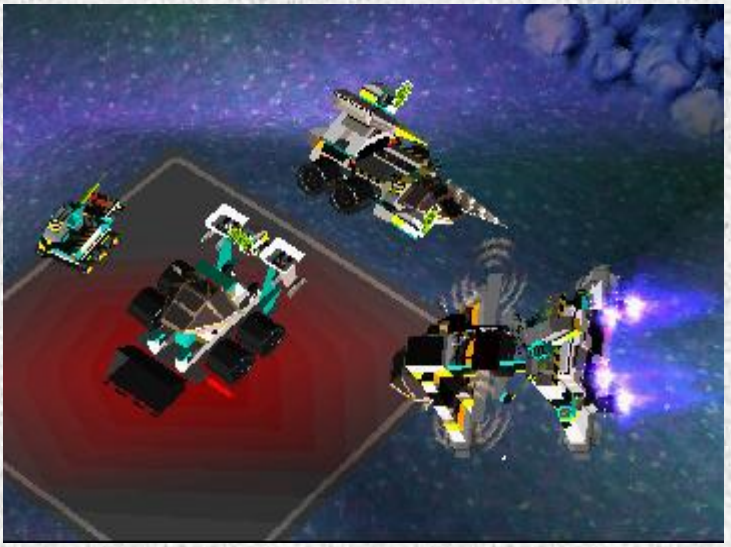
The PlayStation version of Rock Raiders, on the other hand, can be summarised as…

- Action game, loosely similar to BlastCorps on N64.
- Player controls vehicles directly using the joypad (player is effectively 'driving' the vehicles).
- Player swaps between vehicles and uses their unique abilities to overcome obstacles in the way.
- Player can only control one vehicle at a time.
- Player wins each level by achieving certain goals – these will change from level to level.
- Example missions: the player has to find and rescue a specific number of Rock Raiders within a time limit; the player has to outrun a cascading lava flow; the player has to defend the base from Rock Monster attack.
- Unique two-player 'cooperative play' mode, complete with specially-designed missions.

It's important to stress that the changes to the PlayStation version have not come about due to any technical problems trying to port the PC game across. Rather, it's believed that the design proposed in this document is better suited to the console – traditionally, PC strategy games have not translated well to the PlayStation (partly because of the difficulty replicating mouse control on a joypad) but, more importantly, they don't have the same appeal to the machine's core market who typically prefer fast, arcade-style action.

GAME ENGINE

LEGO Rock Raiders is set in a real-time 3D polygon-based environment. The 3D meshes that make up each of the levels can undulate wildly and the different texture maps overlaying them allow for a wide range of terrain types, including lava, ice, water and rock.



The differing terrains not only increase the game's visual richness but also add depth of gameplay. Each Rock Raiders vehicle has specific physics code and exhibits unique handling, giving a very enjoyable control experience. In addition, the handling changes subtly depending on the terrain being traversed.

The Sony PlayStation platform's advanced graphics capabilities will enable us to achieve strong visual effects and gameplay as it has been designed purely with real-time 3D in mind and has excellent additional capabilities, such as lighting and sound.

LIGHTING EFFECTS

Dynamic lighting, fog and other transparency effects will be employed to enhance the look of the game. In addition, animating textures will be used to bring areas of water and lava to life.

SOUND

XM music and XA audio will be used to enhance the atmosphere of the game. We also hope to incorporate Surround Sound into the XM music player if the libraries allow this to be done (there was mention that this would be the case at the last DevCon).

CAMERA VIEWS

As the player explores each level the camera's built-in AI automatically and intelligently rotates the player's view to provide the best visual experience and eliminate the need to falsely remove near-side walls that could otherwise

block views. This freedom will allow us to create a more realistic playing environment without having to make compromises to graphics or game-play. As the camera moves, it glides smoothly from one position to the next.

When a vehicle is moving slowly the camera zooms in, and then zooms out to show more of the map area as the vehicle's speed increases. The camera will always 'looks ahead' of the direction that the unit is facing, so more of the area the player is moving into is visible. The faster a vehicle moves the further 'ahead' the camera looks, but never so far that the vehicle is not fully visible.

If the route ahead is blocked (e.g. the player tries to drive or drill into a cave wall) the camera will zoom in and its angle tilt down from overhead to a lower (approx. 45º) view . It will zoom out and up again as the direction ahead opens up. Similarly, when a Rock Raider is travelling on foot the camera tilts down slightly from overhead to more of a 45º view.

In the two-player mode the camera will always point dead centre between the two player's Rock Raider units, in a manner akin to the old Atari coin-op Gauntlet.

GAME STRUCTURE & DESIGN

ONE-PLAYER GAME

The one-player game will consist of over twenty action-packed levels or missions, unfolding a thrilling story leading from the Rock Raiders' first tentative explorations of the alien planet's subterranean depths, through their first encounters with alien lifeforms, and finally to the establishing of a fully-functioning base.

In each mission the player will control a lone Rock Raider beamed down to beneath the planet's surface. Here they will find various exploration and mining-class vehicles which they can commandeer and swap between at will, simply by walking from one vehicle to the next. Success in each mission will depend on achieving pre-set objectives, often within a strict time limit, while fending off attacks from the indigenous alien lifeforms.

The first few missions will act as tutorial levels, introducing the player to the various vehicles one by one so that they can learn how they behave. Subsequent missions will gradually introduce some of the more hostile elements of the Rock Raiders world, such as Rock Monsters and lava streams, and add further complication by requiring the player to juggle the use of two, three, four or even more vehicles to achieve their mission objectives. The levels will range in style, complexity and pace, but all will be structured so that they build upon skills learnt in previous levels.

Mission Briefing

Each mission begins with a briefing from Chief, the leader of the Rock Raiders, on the bridge of the LMS Explorer. A holographic display will illustrate the mission objectives via a combination of text and graphics, and there will also be a spoken mission briefing from Chief himself (which will basically repeat what's written on the holo-display).

Once the player has digested the objectives (which can also be brought up any time during the mission if forgotten), the holo-display disappears to reveal the Rock Raiders team engaged in their duties on the bridge. The player is free to choose any one of the team, who is then beamed down to the surface and the mission begins.

Mission Content

The player will typically start in a small cave or cavern, often with a vehicle conveniently located nearby (although the obvious choice may not always be the most appropriate one to complete the mission successfully!). Each mission will comprise some of the following elements:

- Tunnels linking large and small caverns together, forming labyrinth-like mazes.

- Four types of rock:
  - Loose soil – Easy to dig through whether the Rock Raider is on foot or in a drilling machine.
  - Soft rock – Harder to dig through; drilling machine's are recommended!
  - Hard rock – Cannot be dug through; needs to be 'blasted' with dynamite.
  - Impenetrable rock – Cannot be dug through at all!

- Natural obstructions:
  - Lava flows – Hazardous to anything that comes into contact; cunning players will find ways to bridge seemingly impossible rivers of lava in order to reach bonus crystals.
  - Underground rivers – Vary from babbling brooks to raging torrents that only the most skilful of players will successfully cross.
  - Underground lakes and pools – Have to find ways across or around.
  - Ice – No problem for the large drilling unit with its heavy-grip tyres, but other vehicles may slip and slide.

- Alien creatures:
  - Rock monsters (and their cousins, Lava and Ice monsters) – Dangerous even to those in a vehicle.
  - Scabby scavengers – Dangerous when encountered in large numbers.
  - Scorpions, snakes, spiders and bats – Pose a serious threat to any Rock Raiders on foot.

Limited time will be a key motivating factor in the majority of the missions, adding tension and providing an arcade-style feel to the gameplay. The time limiting factor can be implemented in a number of ways: forced screen scrolls caused by the movement of molten lava or rushing water, where a player must escape destruction by staying ahead and reaching safe ground; or triggered events where a player must achieve specific goals before disaster strikes, such as reinforcing walls to prevent cave-ins or moving explosive equipment away from an earthquake zone before the next quake!

Teleport Pads

As the player explores the underground world, he will often find deactivated teleport pads which can be powered up by simply touching them. These then act as ‘continue points’ – if the player has to retry the mission, they start from the last activated teleport pad.

Failing a Mission

Should a Rock Raider fail a mission, either by taking too much damage or by not completing the mission objectives in the set time, they will be beamed back to the Explorer and sent on enforced R&R leave. The player can now attempt the mission again, using any of the remaining ‘active’ Rock Raiders. If the player fails the mission five times (i.e. they ‘use up’ all the active Rock Raiders) then the game ends. Depending on the game’s difficulty level, Rock Raiders on R&R leave could be unavailable for a subsequent one or two missions.

Winning Medals

The player’s success in a mission will be judged on several criteria, primarily things like time taken to complete it, any trapped Rock Raiders/vehicles rescued and energy crystals found. If players perform exceptionally – for example, they find 50% more crystals than required to complete the mission – they may earn a Silver Medal or, if they perform even better, a Gold Medal.

Earning Silver medals on all the missions will open up a special ‘bonus’ level, while getting Gold medals on all missions will open up a second extra-special ‘bonus’ level. (Note that the player can replay any mission previously completed as many times as they like to earn these medals.)

TWO-PLAYER GAME

In the two-player game each player controls a Rock Raider and plays on the same screen, in the same manner as the Atari coin-op Gauntlet. The emphasis will be on cooperation, with each player helping the other achieve the mission objectives. For example, one player may jump in a drilling machine and hunt for crystals while the other takes care of the marauding hordes of Rock Monsters.

Although the two-player missions will have similar objectives to those in the one-player game, they will be specially designed to offer the best multi-player experience. The number of two-player missions has yet to be finalised.

ROCK RAIDERS TEAM

There are six different Rock Raiders. Chief, the captain of the LMS Explorer, provides the mission briefings while the other five – Jet, Axle, Sparks, Docs and Bandit – can be selected for play before each mission. The differences between each Rock Raider are more than cosmetic; each has different abilities which affect the gameplay. While it’s possible to complete any mission with any team member, some will be easier if you choose wisely. Learning which abilities will be of more use for a mission will, along with the medal incentive, add to the game’s longevity.

Movement

Each Rock Raider while on foot can run, jump and carry items (e.g. energy crystals). While 'jumping' the Rock Raider is still controllable with the direction keys, and the longer the jump button is held down the higher and longer the jump will be.

Special Abilities

Each of the Rock Raiders team has a special ability to help them complete each mission:

Name: Docs
Job: Geologist
Ability: Radar always on full display (no need for maps)

Name: Sparks
Job: Engineer
Ability: Vehicles repair themselves when he’s driving them.

Name: Axle
Job: Driver
Ability: Vehicles can take withstand more damage from attacks and go faster

Name: Bandit
Job: Sailor
Ability: Able to swim and makes sailing craft go faster.

Name: Jet
Job: Pilot
Ability: Possesses short burst jet pack – can leap obstacles others can't.

Equipment

Each Rock Raider can find and use various pieces of equipment to clear paths and defend themselves with:

- Dynamite – Once dropped onto the floor, there's a visible count down from 9 to 0 (numbers drift up from the stick and fade away) then an explosion; can blast through hard rock that the diggers can't drill through, and the explosion will also scare away most of the lesser monsters.

- Super Dynamite – Found in key locations (selected by level designer) and cannot be moved; triggered by the player touching it; massive blast radius; Rock Raider must take cover to avoid blast (akin to Bomberman – indeed, the plan is for occasional 'puzzle' sections similar to that game's, in which the player has to work out the right order to detonate the dynamite without setting off a chain reaction or getting caught in the blast).

- Pusher Gun – Can be fired in eight directions; emits a 'sonic pulse' which pushes monsters back in small steps; repeatedly 'pushing' a monster will eventually scare it off; the 'pulse' takes time to reach its target so it can be dodged; 'pushing' Rock Monsters into lava is a good way of getting rid of them!

- Freezer Gun – Can be fired in eight directions; 'freezes' a monster for a set 'short' time period, though it eventually 'defrosts' and continues its assault; especially useful against Lava Monsters!

Collectibles

Rock Raiders may find useful objects (or 'collectibles') that occur naturally or have been left behind by previous explorers. Some collectibles can also be picked up by driving your vehicle over them, but the more precious ones, like energy crystals, have to be carefully picked by hand, adding variety to the gameplay as the player is forced to enter the more vulnerable 'on foot' mode

Examples of planned collectibles are…

- Freezer gun fuel.

- Pusher gun rechargers.
- Sticks of dynamite.
- Energy crystals – give the player power.
- Special energy crystals – award bonus points.
- Map – Shown in the radar, there are four map pieces on each mission/level to find.

Collectibles can be found floating in mid-air, so the Rock Raider will have to jump to collect them. They can also 'drift' or bounce away so the Rock Raider has to run to catch them before they drift off-screen and are lost.

VEHICLES

The player has a wide range of excavation vehicles they can commandeer during the course of the game, which are outlined below:

Hover Scout

Able to float over most surfaces but passes slowly over water and cannot cross lava. As it is very light and hovers just one foot off the ground it is very susceptible to attacks from enemies such as Lava Monsters.

Large Catamaran

Sails on the water and can be used to transport small vehicles, such as the small truck or the small digger.

Large Mobile Laser Platform

This can laser through soft, medium and hard rock very quickly. Should the laser be fired upon a monster it will receive an electric shock and the monster will run away.

Loader Dozer

Can be used to bash into rock at high speed. It can also shovel up large amounts of earth which can then be used to fill crevices or build islands across water.

Tunnel Transport

Can be used to transport men, crystals, ore, even a small truck or digger. It will land, take-off and fly under player control. In addition it can carry and drop water skimmed off lake in its belly scoop, which is useful for dropping on Lava Monsters and halting their advance, or for dropping on lava lakes and forming make-shift bridges.

A Tunnel Transport without a load can fly anywhere on the map, but while it has a load the 'cargo' dangles in the troughs of the tunnels and restricts the helicopter's movement to travelling along a tunnel. The player has to be careful not to smash the cargo into the tunnel walls or risk destroying it.

Rapid Rider

A small water-going catamaran which can transport a Rock Raider and has a small storage area to carry crystals.

Small Digger

Useful for digging soft soil and transporting crystals. It is fairly fast and can outrun most of the creatures it encounters.

Small Mobile Laser Platform

This has similar abilities to the large mobile laser platform, but is lighter and faster and can only drill soft and medium rock.

Small Truck

The fastest land-based vehicle with a storage space for one crystal.

Granite Grinder

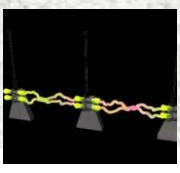
Capable of negotiating the bumpiest of terrain and can break cave walls by repeated ramming and drilling them, creating a sort of hammer action.

Small Helicopter

Capable of transporting only the pilot but needs fuel. It has a turbo action for very fast speed and is excellent for flying across difficult terrain, e.g. water or lava. Due to its flying height and turbo jets it is very difficult for monsters to attack it in flight.

Chrome Crusher

One of the most powerful vehicles in the Rock Raiders universe, capable of clearing vast swathes of rock with either its front drill or rear-mounted laser turret.



Electric Fences

These act as powered conductors which shoot lightning bolts at anything in close proximity. Spiders and scorpions (or Rock Raiders) getting too close will get zapped!

ALIEN LIFEFORMS

There are many weird and wonderful creatures populating the underground caverns of the Rock Raiders universe. Here's a sample of them…

Rock Monster

A very powerful land-based enemy that will punch vehicles and buildings or stamp its feet, causing earth tremors which can topple even Granite Grinders. Once disturbed Rock Monsters head straight for any unit, vehicle or building in the vicinity and ram into it; as they are made of rock, hitting things causes them no damage. Vehicles take more damage depending on which side is hit. Some sides, e.g. the front of the bulldozer, are well protected against attacks (although not totally invulnerable)

Ice Monster

This creature has similar abilities to the Rock Monster but as it is lighter in weight it cannot cause earth tremors. It can however freeze Rock Raiders or their vehicles in a tomb of ice with its frosty breath. If a vehicle is encased in ice it will require fully de-frosting before becoming operational again.

Lava Monster

This creature lives in the lava and will fire jets or balls of molten rock at anything that comes close to its domain. This is a very dangerous creature and can move through the lava very rapidly, often laying in ambush for unsuspecting victims.

Large Spiders

These are very fast insects which can spit web over short distances. They tend to ambush Rock Raiders by surrounding and immobilizing their vehicles with their sticky web.

Rock Whale

The Rock Whale is a large, lumbering oaf of a creature, which slowly walks around the level. It often stops for a sleep in the most awkward of places and can cause delays forcing the Rock Raiders to use alternative routes, which often means drilling or digging around it. However, if provoked it can attack using its body as a battering ram.

The Rock Whale is indestructible but if bumped into or zapped with a gun, it will slowly lift up onto its stumpy legs and waddle slowly away. If the Rock Raider keeps 'zapping' it then it will keep moving, otherwise it will settle down again. Shooting at its head will cause it to turn, so Rock Raiders can theoretically 'herd' them out of the way. Rock whales can move through water but they sink, although this does make a nice impromptu bridge.

Scabby Scavenger

This mischievous creature steals crystals and even wheels from vehicles. He usually gets bored with his booty and will drop it nearby and go off to find something else of interest.

Slugs

Slugs act like small battering rams. They often work in packs but, due to their weight, they inflict only minimal damage on large vehicles. That said, a sustained attack can be quite devastating for small vehicles.

Scorpions, Snakes & Bats

These creatures are harmless to vehicles, but pose a real threat to any Rock Raiders on foot. If they sense a Rock Raider in the open they will head straight for him and bump into him, causing damage, and then jump back. They will then attack again.

Fortunately these creatures are slower moving than a Rock Raider, and can be pushed or frozen with the guns or scared away by a dynamite explosion. If they get too close to an electric fence they will get zapped.

OTHER HAZARDS

The perils that the Rock Raiders must overcome are many and varied…

Spiders Web

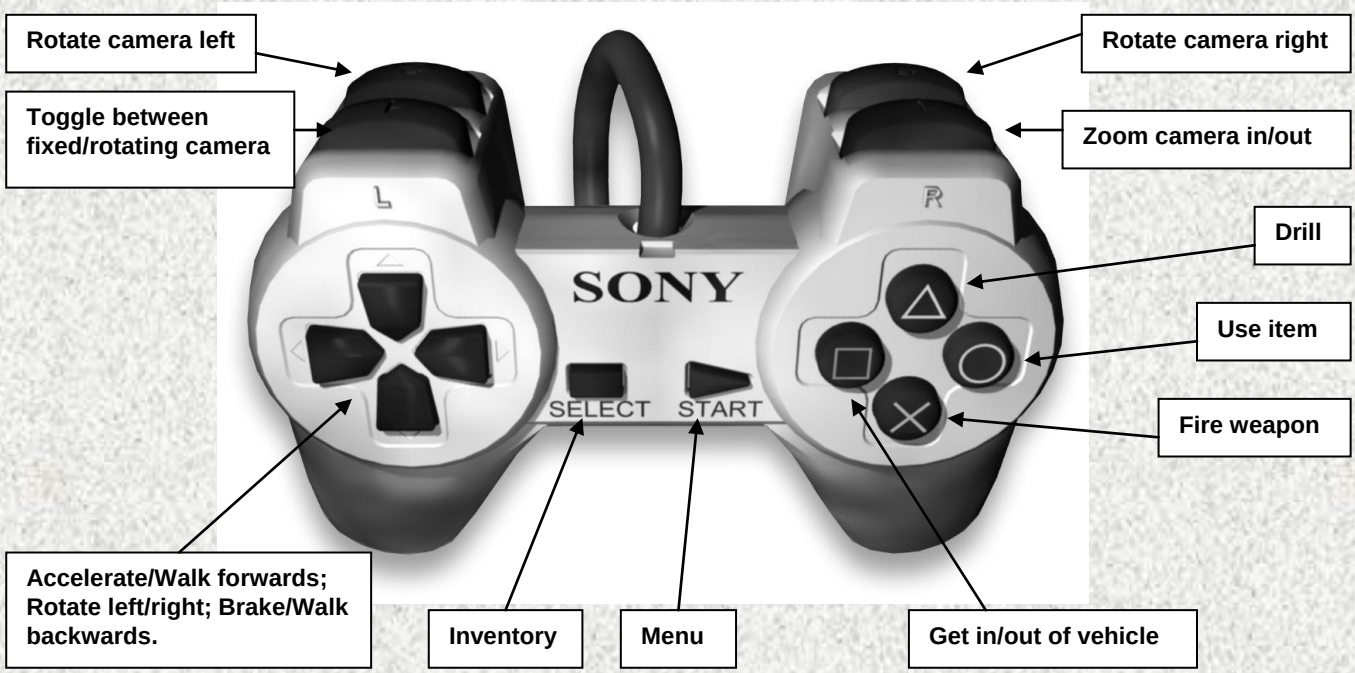
This slimy, sticky substance will rapidly bring even the biggest vehicle to a halt. If encountered, the Rock Raider has to go out on foot and clear away the web by shooting it. This is very dangerous, as where there's web there's often spiders too…

Lava Flows

Lava has a tendency to flow, and in some missions the player will have a frantic race against time to rescue Rock Raiders and their vehicles before they're swallowed up by the creeping molten mess.

JOYPAD CONTROLS

This is the default control pad configuration for Rock Raiders on the PlayStation. The player has total freedom to configure the pad via the options menu at any time.



DUAL SHOCK CONTROLLER SUPPORT

Rock Raiders will feature full support for the Dual Shock controller, its analogue sticks giving the player extremely subtle control over each vehicle's movement leading to an even more enjoyable gaming experience.

APPENDIX 1: EXAMPLE MISSIONS

This appendix contains three example missions of increasing difficulty. All the missions can be completed in several ways, though only repeated play will reveal the best.

EXAMPLE MISSION 1: LAVA RIVERS

Mission Objective

An unexpected volcanic eruption has stranded a Small Mobile Laser Platform (SMLP) in a dangerous area of the planet. Although safe for now, it is surrounded by lava rivers which are slowly eroding the ground beneath it. You must find the SMLP and return it to the Teleport Pad. You will also need to collect 10 energy crystals to power the Pad and beam the SMLP back to the Explorer. Be warned: there are reports of Lava Monsters in the area!

Level Design

Key:

- Open area.
- Soft rock (easily drillable).
- Hard rock (need dynamite to blast it).
- Energy crystal.
- Dynamite deposit.
- Hidden cavern (may contain monsters).
- Lava.
- Water.

1: Starting position of the Rock Raider and the Teleport Pad.
2: Starting position of the Small Digger.
3: Starting position of the Tunnel Transport.
4: Starting position of the Small Mobile Laser Platform (SMLP).

Mission Solutions

Solution 1

Use the Rock Raider to tunnel to the SMLP and use it to drive back to the Teleport Pad.

Using this method it's almost impossible to reach the SMLP before it's swallowed up by the lava. Manual drilling is very slow, and a lot of time will be lost defending against or escaping from monster attacks.

Solution 2

Use the Rock Raider to tunnel to the Small Digger and use it to drill to the SMLP. Now use the SMLP to drive to the Teleport Pad.

This is a hard way to complete the mission, as the Small Digger tunnels quite slowly. Also, the Small Digger has very little defence capability and will be forced to evade monster attacks, thus wasting time.

Solution 3

Use the Rock Raider to tunnel to the Small Digger and use it to drill to the Tunnel Transport. Use the Tunnel Transport to fly to one of the lakes and scoop up some water. Now fly to the lava river, hover and drop the water; this cools and solidifies the lava to form a bridge. Land the Tunnel Transport near the SMLP and use it to drive back to the Teleport Pad, employing its laser turret to drill through rock quickly.

This solution offers the fastest way to complete the mission, although choosing the best route from the SMLP to the Teleport Pad will also contribute to the overall success.

EXAMPLE MISSION 2: LAVA DAMS

Mission Objective

A Small Helicopter needs to be returned to the Explorer for essential maintenance. Your mission is to locate the vehicle and fly it to the Teleport Pad. You will need to collect 20 energy crystals to power the Teleport Pad and the beam the Small Helicopter back to the ship. Unfortunately, due to electronic interference from the planet's atmosphere the Teleport Pad has beamed down onto an island surrounded by lava.

Level Design

Key:

- Open area.
- Soft rock (easily drillable).
- Hard rock (need dynamite to blast it).
- Energy crystal.
- Dynamite deposit.
- Hidden cavern (may contain monsters).
- Lava.
- Water.

1: Starting position of the Small Helicopter.
2: Starting position of the Teleport Pad.
3: Starting position of the Rock Raider.
4: Starting position of the Granite Grinder.
5: Soft rock wall damming the lava river.
6: Hard rock wall damming the lava river.
7: Starting position of the Small Catamaran.

Mission Solutions

Solution 1

Use the Rock Raider to tunnel to the Small Catamaran and use it to sail over the lake to the Small Helicopter. Use the Small Helicopter to fly to the Teleport Pad, landing and manually drilling a path through the rock as required.

Using this method it's almost impossible to complete the mission in the time available. Manual drilling is very slow, and a lot of time will be lost defending against or escaping from monster attacks.

Solution 2

Use the Rock Raider to tunnel to the Granite Grinder and use it to drill to the Small Catamaran. Use the Small Catamaran to sail over the lake to the Small Helicopter. Use the Small Helicopter to fly to the Teleport Pad, landing and manually drilling a path through the rock as required.

The Granite Grinder will save some time, but it will still be tough to complete the mission within the time limit.

Solution 3

Use the Rock Raider to tunnel to the Granite Grinder and use it to drill to the Small Catamaran. Use the Small Catamaran to sail over the lake to the Small Helicopter. Use the Small Helicopter to fly over the lava river which leads towards the Teleport Pad. Note that there are two dams, one of soft rock and one of hard rock, which must be removed. The player can choose to destroy them either before or after locating the helicopter, by drilling a path to them with the Granite Grinder and dropping sticks of dynamite.

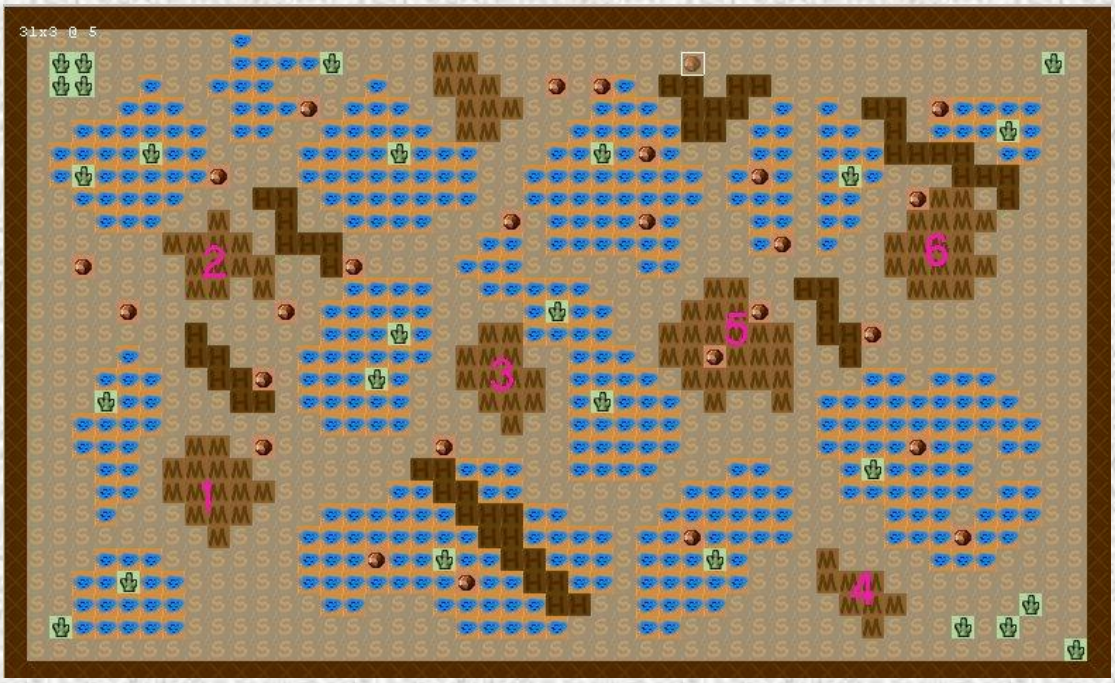
This is the fastest solution, although a lot depends on the exact paths taken from objective to objective.

EXAMPLE MISSION 3: MONSTER MADNESS!

Mission Objective

The mining site has been overrun with Rock Monsters, slugs, scorpions and other dangerous creatures, forcing the mining crew to abandon their vehicles. Your task is to locate and electronically tag all the vehicles, so that they can be teleported back to the ship. You will also need to find 15 energy crystals to power the Teleport Pad.

Level Design



Key:

- Open area.
- Soft rock (easily drillable).
- Hard rock (need dynamite to blast it).
- Energy crystal.
- Dynamite deposit.
- Hidden cavern (may contain monsters).
- Lava.
- Water.

1: Starting position of the Rock Raider.
2: Starting position of the Granite Grinder.
3: Starting position of the Chrome Crusher.
4: Starting position of the Small Mobile Laser Platform.
5: Starting position of the Small Digger.
6: Starting position of the Small Truck.

Mission Solution

The best way to complete this mission is to avoid monsters as much as possible, as conflict will slow your progress. However, if you do have to defend yourself ensure that you are in one of the more powerful defensive vehicles (such as the SMLP). In less powerful vehicles it may be advisable to go on foot, and use your freezer or pusher guns to immobilise the enemy. Take care, as there will be hordes of monsters in the caverns waiting to attack.

GENERAL HINTS & TIPS

1: Use dynamite to blast hard rock.

2: Keep an eye on the timer and vary your strategy accordingly.

3: Avoid conflict with enemies – it wastes time and you risk taking damage.

4: Don't leave vehicles unattended for too long as they may be attacked by monsters.

5: Collect crystals as you progress to power the Teleport Pad.